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The GREAT SCOOP

*MOLLY ELLIOT
SEHWELL*







THE GREAT SCOOP

By

Molly Elliot Seawell

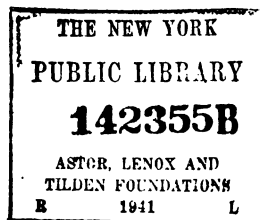
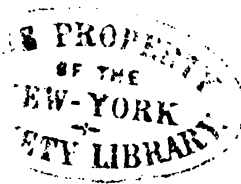
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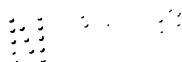
THE GREAT SCOOP



CHAPTER I.

"AND now," said the managing editor, pushing his green shade back to the top of his head, "send the new office-boy in, drat him!"

Curzon might be excused for "dratting" a boy he had never laid eyes on, after his experiences with a long series of incapables. For there had been a steady procession in the *Daily Times* office of bad boys and stupid boys and



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lazy boys and worthless boys of every description, until Curzon had rashly declared there wasn't such a thing left on earth as a trustworthy, bright, truthful boy, who wanted a good place in a newspaper office at five dollars a week!

"As for cleanliness and a fair share of intelligence," groaned Curzon, tossing a pile of exchanges across the room, "I simply leave that out of the calculation! This winter I meant to make the paper the cleverest, strongest journal on this side of the equator, and instead of that, I have done nothing but engage office-boys and dismiss them. When I ought to have been writing a leading article on silver or pensions or our foreign relations, I have been ridden by the nightmare of finding an office-boy. If this

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fellow doesn't answer, I shall go to the editor and proprietors and ask them for a six months' holiday with pay, so I can brace up my shattered constitution after this agony of office-boys. Well, sir, what's your name?"

The new office-boy had entered, and had marched up to the big desk in the middle of the room where Curzon sat. There were a dozen other desks in the room, and at one in a corner a group of local reporters had gathered, waiting for the city editor to appear and give them their assignments. They were all young men, and all belonged to the well-dressed, college-bred type of young man, who is prone in these days to gravitate toward great metropolitan newspapers. The managing editor's tribulations with his

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office-boys had occasioned much secret amusement to the staff of reporters, and pinned upon the big middle desk were various spirited cartoons from the pens of these young gentlemen.

The new boy, however, was distinctly different from any of his predecessors. In the first place, he was older than most of them, being a well-grown fellow of fifteen; then he had the well-set-up air characteristic of the boy who has been to school, and has been taught to sit and stand and walk properly. And he was an astonishingly clean boy. Not only were his somewhat shabby clothes well brushed and his patched shoes blacked, but when his wide mouth expanded into a smile, he showed two rows of perfectly

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white teeth. He answered promptly enough Curzon's question.

"Henshaw, sir. Richard Henshaw."

Curzon, who was still a young man and who had acquired, as he said, a feverish interest in office-boys, proceeded to cross-question Henshaw in a way that the boy regarded as joking; but just as much can be found out by chaffing a boy as in any other way.

"Well, Mr. Henshaw," said Curzon, blandly, "may I ask what other inducement, besides the paltry stipend of five dollars a week, inclines you to enter the newspaper profession?"

"Because a fellow has a chance to rise, sir, in the newspaper business," answered Henshaw, with a very polite inflection in his voice. "Some fellows has rose from

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where I am, sir, to — to — where you are.”

“Quite true,” answered Curzon, with a grin of enjoyment, “but you will have to lay aside that expression ‘has rose’ some time between now and the culmination of your ambition.”

“Have risen,” corrected Henshaw, who was no fool, although his grammar was far from perfect.

“Very well, Mr. Henshaw. But don’t let me hear of your saying that you have entered the journalistic profession; there are no journalists on this paper — only plain newspaper men.”

Henshaw did not quite understand the point of this joke, but he liked the man-aging editor’s looks in spite of his chaff,

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and made up his mind to say yes whenever he could.

“Well,” continued Curzon, eyeing Henshaw with increasing approval, “suppose I sent you up-stairs to the composing-room with about two columns of stuff marked ‘*Must*,’ and the foreman told you he hadn’t two stickfuls of space left. What would you do?”

“Why,” said Henshaw, pulling his ear meditatively, “I’d say, ‘Mr. Foreman, just write that down on a slip, please, ’cause if you don’t the managing editor’ll most likely say I ain’t brought the message straight.’”

At that Curzon very gravely wrote a few words on a scrap of paper and handed it to Henshaw.

“Take that down to the business office

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and tell them to put your name on the books. When can you report for duty?"

"Now, sir," answered Henshaw.

"Haven't you got to see your mother or your father or somebody?"

"No, sir, I ain't got either. I've got a sister, Mary Henshaw, who is sixteen, and does for the rest of us, and I told her I meant to stay here if I got the job."

"And how many are you, besides Miss Mary?"

"Two more besides me. Jane is eleven, and then there's Hugh. He's older than Mary, but he'll never be much help now."

"Why not?" asked Curzon, with his eye on the clock.

"Back's hurt badly," responded Henshaw, briefly.

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Then there was a little pause. It was just one of those human tragedies which are unexpectedly revealed by the directness and simplicity of the poor. If Henshaw had been a rich boy and brought up to look on the velvet side of life, he would probably have said "spinal affection," "injury to his back," or something to soften the piteous truth. But he spoke quite simply and frankly. Curzon did not ask any questions, but something kindly in his eyes encouraged the boy to go on.

"Hugh was going to be a photographer, a real artist photographer — before he got hurt. He's got his camera and things, but he can't do any work to speak of. My sister Mary takes care of all of us. Mary's the boss, sure."

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"Young man," said Curzon, sternly, glad to escape from the painful impression left by Henshaw's story, "I beg and insist that you will abandon the use of that vulgarism, 'boss.' The *Daily Times* is the recognised authority upon the use of the English language for the whole civilised world, from Point Barrow in the frozen zone to Hoboken, and the word 'boss' is never admitted into its editorial columns. Now skip!"

Henshaw "skipped" with a light heart. When the boy returned to the great room, with its many windows and high ceiling and innumerable desks and gas-jets, Curzon was gone. Henshaw fell immediately into the clutches of the young reporters still waiting for the city editor. Guying the office-boy had

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been one of their principal recreations for a good while past.

"I say, Mr. Henshaw," began one, with elaborate respect, "we of the reportorial staff are thinking of giving you a dinner at Dumaine's, such as we gave Mr. Mildmay, the editor, upon his return from Europe, to celebrate your arrival among us."

Now, if there was anything Henshaw did know when he saw it, it was a joke. His eyes twinkled, and he advanced toward the young fellow with his hands in his pockets and a broad smile, showing his white teeth. And the young fellow was so handsome and well-dressed! He was not more than twenty-two years old, and he wore glasses over his black eyes, and his little dark moustache was

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beautifully trimmed! Henshaw loved him almost the moment he looked at him.

“I’m much obliged to you,” he said, smiling bashfully. “Any date you name will be agreeable to me, and I’ll be on hand prompt, in my swallow-tail coat.”

Then another young man took a hand.

“Gentlemen,” said he, “I perceive that Mr. Henshaw has a sense of humour. He also appears to be addicted to personal neatness, and from his own description, I judge him to be a family man of unexceptionable character. Therefore I suggest, in lieu of the proposed banquet, we each subscribe a quarter for Mr. Henshaw, to purchase a testimonial of our esteem. What do you say, Mr. Henshaw?”

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"No, I thank you," answered Henshaw, blushing up to his eyes.

"And why not, Mr. Henshaw?" asked the black-eyed young man with the glasses.

"Because — because — I'm too old," stammered the boy. "If I was a little shaver, now, it wouldn't matter. But I — I — can't take money for nothing, now I'm fifteen years old."

"Quite a mature age, Sevier," remarked Murray, the black-eyed fellow, laughing. And all of them liked the boy ten times better for his independence.

"See here, you young rapsallion!" cried Sevier, suddenly changing his tone. "I believe you're going to suit, and I tell you what, you will have to look alive. And mind you, reform your grammar.

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Every time you make a grammatical mistake, you will have Webster's Unabridged thrown at your head. So either hold your tongue altogether or use good language, and mind what you're told. Understand?"

"Yes, sir," answered Henshaw, blushing and smiling still more.

Henshaw found that day the happiest of his life. He had plenty to do; it was on the eve of a presidential election, and the newspaper offices were buzzing like beehives. There was a continual stream in and out of the room across the narrow hall marked "Private," where Mr. Mildmay, the editor, sat in solitary magnificence. Messenger boys were coming and going all the time, and "Sevier, you'll have to do this before twelve

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o'clock," and "Murray, get up to the Grand Hotel as quickly as you can, and tell the governor that Mildmay *must* see him and make an appointment," and things of that sort were going on all day. The telephones were ringing, and the noise of workmen putting on a special wire and the preparations to show stereopticon views the next night added to the busy hum.

At six o'clock there was a lull. The editors and reporters took turns in scampering off to a neighbouring chop-house to get dinner. According to his engagement, Henshaw was off duty at six o'clock, but he saw that there was work for everybody in the office and he stayed on, carrying messages, running from one part of the building to another, and an-

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swering the telephone. He had fifteen cents in his pocket, and he negotiated with a messenger boy to carry a note to Mary at the little frame house on the edge of town, where the Henshaws made their home. It was a very satisfactory note — to Mary. It read thus:

“DEAR MARY:— I’ve got the place — five dollars a week. It’s a bully place. [Here Henshaw, bearing in mind Sevier’s threats, erased “bully” and wrote “first-class.”] It’s very busy here now, and I think I’ll stay on until the paper goes to press, so don’t worry if I don’t get home till daylight. Won’t Hugh and Jane be glad! Yours,

“RICHARD HENSHAW.”

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By this note it will be seen that Henshaw did not, all at once, acquire a command of perfect English, or he would hardly have expressed a belief that Hugh and Jane would be glad because he might not be home all night.

About half-past seven the editorial rooms filled up again. By that time the special wire was in working order, and the steady click, click of the instrument was heard from the operator at his table. Curzon came in, and, dashing off coat and hat, seated himself at his desk and wrote rapidly for half an hour, apparently undisturbed by the coming and going and constant subdued talking round him. Then he threw himself back in his chair and addressed the room generally.

"Now," said he, "the *Daily Times* is

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ready for any emergency. If the Republicans come out on top, here's what the *Times* has to say about it; and if the Democrats give them a licking, there's an able editorial announcing the fact. I've said 'close margin' in all the doubtful States, but, if there should happen to be a landslide, it will be easy enough to correct the proof. See here, you boy, take this up-stairs, and tell them to send me the proof as soon as it is ready."

Henshaw took the two slips marked in blue pencil "Edtl" (for editorial) and ran up-stairs with them. He was a bright fellow, and he knew instinctively a good deal of what Curzon meant. The next day the returns would be coming in all day long, and anything written about the election would have to be cor-

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rected at quarter-past two in the morning, when the clang of the great presses in the subcellar would begin; therefore Curzon expressed his anticipated sentiments, subject to revision when the time came to print them.

Until about twelve o'clock nobody seemed to observe that Henshaw had remained on duty. Then Curzon called him up and handed him a dollar, saying, "Go to the restaurant and get something to eat. Your time was up at six, but I see you stayed on. I'll keep you all night to-morrow night, and pay you for overtime. Get home now as quick as you can, and don't go into any saloons. If you do, you'll lose your job, sure."

Henshaw had completely forgotten in the excitement and hurry of the day that

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he had not had anything to eat since he munched the last sandwich of the stock provided by the careful Mary. This had been at about six o'clock. He instantly felt hungry; but he had no notion of spending his dollar at a restaurant. He seized his coat and hat, said "Good night!" and got down the stairs three steps at a time. The cars were still running, and he had five cents for his fare home besides his dollar. He jumped on the first car that passed, and in twenty minutes he and Mary and little Jane were sitting on the edge of Hugh's bed, congratulating themselves upon the astounding good fortune that had befallen the Henshaw family. Mary had promptly secured the dollar.

"Because it's as likely as not you'll

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go out and buy something for Hugh that *you* think will please him, when he really needs so many things, and I'll take the liberty of spending it for him myself."

"Ain't we the worst henpecked fellows in town?" asked Richard of Hugh, with a grin, as he yielded up the dollar.

Hugh smiled as he lay back on his bed. He was a handsome young fellow — the only really handsome one of the Henshaw children, and the darling of them all, as he had been their pride once. The Henshaws were all strongly alike. They not only had industry, but ambition, in their crude young way. Mary, the capable sister of sixteen, was perhaps the most ambitious of them all. It was she who had preached to Hugh ever since they had been left fatherless and motherless

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two years before. "Now, Hugh, you are the best-looking and the brightest of us all, and I don't want you to be just wasting yourself doing a day's work here and a day's work there. I want you to be at something that will be a business for you. We've got this house, and we can let rooms, and do lots of things, just to keep us from starving, and in three or four years you'll be started and be able to give Dick a hand, and then, some day, we'll have a nice house, and live as we did in papa's time."

It was, of course, the untried theory of an inexperienced girl; but it worked extraordinarily well, owing to the tenacity and strength of character that seemed to run in the Henshaw blood. Hugh secured a place in a photograph gallery,

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where he showed genuine talent for his business. The Henshaws let all of their frame cottage except two rooms. Sometimes they had enough to eat, and sometimes they were really in need. Richard went to the public school, although his jacket was rusty and his shoes were the worst in school, and so did little Jane. Mary, the industrious, the bright-eyed, the determined, kept them all going.

“It isn’t enough for me,” cried she, with her fifteen-year-old knowledge of life, “to be just respectable and have enough to eat! I want to be something more. I want people to say, when they see us, ‘There are those Henshaws. They’ve just worked and worked, and tried to do something and be something, and now see! They’re doing well, and

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have got some education, and are as good as anybody.' ”

Up to the time of Hugh's accident all this seemed likely of fulfilment. The doctors' bills were paid by his employer, but in a very little while the doctors said they could do no more for him. He might get well after a great many years, and, if he lay on his back for a long, long time, he would certainly improve; but treating him would do no good. Hugh heard the news with silent fortitude; Mary, for once, gave way completely, and for days was in despair; but it was not in her to give up wholly. She rallied, and, with only Richard to help her, began again the sharp struggle to live.

They were very, very poor, but it never occurred to them to ask for charity, or

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to do anything but work. Whenever Richard made a little money, he was likely, as Mary said, to squander it on something that he thought would give Hugh pleasure; but Mary, if she secured it, would, with her usual good sense, spend it in procuring wholesome food for him, or some other necessity. The two brothers loved this strong young sister with all their hearts, and it was their joke that "Mary is boss." Little Jane was helpful in taking care of Hugh and in a thousand other ways. Latterly, there had been unmistakable signs that Hugh was improving. This, with Richard's successful launching into the newspaper business, seemed to the assembled Henshaws the dawn of a dazzling prosperity.



CHAPTER II.

THE next morning, bright and early, Henshaw was on hand at the office. Things began earlier that day on account of the election. Usually, the office of a morning newspaper is a pretty lonely spot until toward the afternoon.

But on this day it was busy from the start. Across the way, the *Morning Journal*, the business and political rival of the *Daily Times*, was evidently as much alive as the *Daily Times*. Both had made elaborate preparations for cel-

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celebrating victory, and their editorial columns had shrieked with triumph before the fight began.

The autumn day was beautiful and bright, and pretty soon upon the bulletin-boards appeared the startling announcements: "Splendid weather prevailing. Large vote being polled. Election proceeding quietly." Great crowds of people assembled to read these glittering generalities, much to Henshaw's amusement, who thought they were taking a great deal of trouble for a trifle.

The local staff were nearly run off their legs, but the other people about the office had rather an easy time of it. Everybody who came in and asked the news — and Henshaw thought the whole city had abandoned itself to that inquiry

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— was duly informed that the party represented by the *Daily Times* was certain of victory. People generally went over to the office of the *Morning Journal* to get a confirmation of this, and were informed that the *Times* party did not have a chance, and the *Times* knew it.

The reporters and editors laughed and joked incessantly, but there was that strange and intense excitement among them all that invariably marks a presidential election. As Henry Ward Beecher said once: "Every four years the sober American public goes raving crazy all at once. Everybody turns lunatic, and stays so until after the election. Then they all come to their senses and wonder what ailed them."

This was just the case at present, and

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Henshaw learned much about human nature in those first three days in a newspaper office. All shades of political opinion were represented in the staff, and all were expressed with characteristic frankness.

Henshaw had been spurred by Mary to learn something of the history that was making in those days, and was pretty well up in political affairs for a boy of his age. He was an enthusiastic supporter of the party represented by the *Daily Times*, and fully expected that every man and boy on the paper had to be catechised upon his politics. It was a surprise to him, and also a very valuable lesson in tolerance and liberality, to find that as long as they did their work, the reporters on the paper were not an-

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swerable to anybody for their political beliefs.

Late in the November afternoon things began to become of real interest. Bulletins began to be posted, indicating how the local election was going. The city was a close one, but the *Times* party showed a steady gain in every precinct, which, if kept up, would give them the local election. Within an hour after the close of the polls, it was almost beyond a doubt that the *Times* would triumph over the *Morning Journal* in the local elections, anyway.

When Henshaw received the last telephone message from the last ward, at about eight o'clock in the evening, and conveyed it to Curzon, that individual,



"GAVE A WHOOP LIKE A COMANCHE INDIAN."

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a very dignified and businesslike man, gave a whoop like a Comanche Indian.

"Run for your life," he cried, "and tell them to turn on the lights!" — for the *Times* office had been prepared with an outfit of incandescent lights wherewith to celebrate victory.

"You'd better not be too previous," said Woodruff, who, for his party politics, would better have been on the *Journal*. "You've got nothing official yet, and over at the *Journal* they say they have a fighting chance in every ward in the city."

"Bosh!" cried Curzon, while a howl of derision came from Sevier and Murray.

Henshaw started on a run for the door, and Murray, happening to follow him,

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called out loudly, "Here! here!" The three men ran to the door, and saw Henshaw progressing along the narrow hall toward the stairway, making "wheels" as he went. Perceiving that he had an admiring audience, he turned a very scientific double handspring and disappeared down the steps. Henshaw "felt good," as he expressed it, and he had no doubt of success when the whole front of the building blazed forth with light, and the waiting multitude began to cheer.

He had had a double share of sandwiches put up that day, and, hearing Murray, the handsome, the well-dressed, say "I'm hungry, but I can't leave until this thing about the way the city goes is settled," Henshaw sidled up to him and

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said, diffidently: " Mr. Murray, I've got a double allowance of sandwiches here, and if you'll take some — " For answer, Murray grabbed half of Henshaw's stock.

" Admirable boy! " he cried. " Didn't I predict a distinguished career for you the instant I clapped my eyes on you? Doubtless the time will come when you will be sitting yonder in Mildmay's private room, owning and editing the paper, while I shall occupy the humble position of assistant city editor. I do not aspire to more."

Henshaw grinned; he liked to be chaffed by this delightful fellow.

Between eight and nine o'clock everybody seemed truly to go crazy. The news became more and more encourag-

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ing, and the bulletins thrown out by the stereopticon more conclusive. This was varied by portraits of the candidates for President and Vice-President, which always evoked immense cheering from thousands of throats.

After nine o'clock the despatches became so enthusiastic that Curzon felt justified in hiring a brass band, which played patriotic airs as the returns appeared. The *Morning Journal*, though, had by no means given up the fight. A crowd as large, if not as enthusiastic, surrounded the tall building, and a big white screen showed figures and announcements generally diametrically opposite to those displayed by the *Times*. The *Journal* prudently refrained, how-

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ever, from hiring a band, and the bulletins were of a conservative character.

The *Times* then began nagging the *Journal* by throwing remarks on the screen during the intervals between bulletins:

“How is the *Morning Journal* feeling now?” To which the *Journal's* stereopticon promptly replied:

“Pretty well, thank you. Shall feel better, though, when all the returns are in.”

The *Times's* response to this was simply, in gigantic letters a foot long:

“Whoop-de-doodle-do!”

It was indeed whoop-de-doodle-do from that time on. The *Times* was on the winning side — there was no doubt of it. Henshaw was in paroxysms of

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delight. About eleven o'clock the *Journal's* stereopticon showed this sentence:

"A good fighting chance left."

But within half an hour came this lugubrious announcement:

"At present, the enemy appears to have won. But nothing can be positively stated until all the returns are in, which will not be until to-morrow morning. Good night!"

And darkness and gloom settled down upon the *Journal* building.

The *Times* people were ecstatic. Curzon, declaring that one brass band wasn't enough, secured another. The combined racket of the two bands, the cheering and laughter of thousands of people, made pandemonium, which, however, everybody seemed to enjoy. Nobody

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had as good a time as Henshaw, who was so demonstrative that Murray accused him of wishing to curry favour with the new administration. Henshaw modestly declared that he would be perfectly satisfied to be first secretary under Mr. Mildmay, who, it was understood, would be appointed an ambassador.

Everybody in the office was talking, laughing, and skylarking, except the printers up-stairs, who were working under high pressure. The paper was kept back twenty minutes in order to get the latest news, and a new force of men came on to get out another edition at six o'clock.

When Henshaw came out into the street at four o'clock in the morning, there was a kind of ghostly half-light.

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The streets were still alive with people, and the building was a blaze of light, while the pounding of the great presses could be heard a block away.

Henshaw caught a car, curled up in the corner, and before he knew it was sound asleep. He waked involuntarily at his own corner, and, jumping off the car, ran home as fast as his legs could carry him. Mary, who was as great a politician as Richard, appeared in her wrapper, with a candle in her hand. Richard's glowing face told the story. Brother and sister opened Hugh's door quietly, and found him, too, awake. Poor Hugh was awake many hours in the night.

"We've got 'em!" said Richard, in a

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voice of smothered delight, at which Hugh smiled, as pleased as anybody.

It was too late, or rather too early, to begin to tell the story, for fear of waking the lodgers. So they all went to bed, satisfied with the knowledge that they "had 'em." Richard, who was awake by seven o'clock, in spite of having gone to bed after four, hailed a newsboy and recklessly invested two cents in a copy of the *Daily Times*.

Yes, there the news was, in head-lines that looked like bill-posters. Victory was complete. Mary came in to hear the wonderful news; and not Mr. Mildmay, who expected and finally obtained his foreign mission, was any more pleased than these Henshaws.

Richard arrived at the office at nine

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o'clock, but found it in a generally deserted and demoralised state. The business manager, who was of the opposite faith, was on hand early, although grumbling about the expense of the celebration the night before. Mr. Woodruff appeared after awhile, with an unconcerned air, as if nothing had happened. Curzon came late, looking fagged but happy.

If Mr. Mildmay got the diplomatic appointment, Curzon would succeed him as editor-in-chief for four years at least, and he naturally felt elated at the prospect. Murray and Sevier appeared in due time — Sevier looking as if he had not slept for a week, while Murray was as clean-shaven, trim, and well-dressed as usual.

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There were renewed congratulations, and everybody was in a generous mood. When the memorandum for extra expenses went in, Henshaw was credited with a dollar, which Curzon altered to three dollars, on account of the hand-spring, he said. Henshaw thought, and rightly, that in spite of his shabby clothes, hard work, and small pay, he was one of the luckiest fellows in the world.

After that it was not always as gay and lively at the *Times* office, but no boy, perhaps, was ever happier in his work than Richard Henshaw. He saw that he had his foot on the first rung of the ladder, but that it would require tremendous effort to reach the top.

He studied the paper every day in his spare moments, and so became well in-

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formed on current affairs. There was a big bookcase full of books of reference and encyclopædias, and Henshaw, selecting the smallest encyclopædia in the lot, started deliberately to read through it, much to the diversion of the reporters, who professed to be afraid of a boy loaded with so much knowledge. Being older, as well as much more intelligent and ambitious than most office-boys, he had a better footing in the office, and was actually called "Henshaw" instead of simply "Boy."

One thing troubled him. He remembered that at school the teacher had always told him he couldn't write compositions. Indeed, he had always hated the subjects that were propounded: "Influence of Galileo upon the Fifteenth Cen-

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tury," "Describe a Journey Across the Andes," and so forth. And how could he ever be a newspaper man if he couldn't express himself well in writing?

One day, though, about three months after he had been working for the *Times*, he happened to be at the railway station with a note for Mr. Curzon, who was going to the State capital on business.

While Henshaw was waiting for a note in reply to Mr. Mildmay that Curzon was dashing off, he saw Mr. Snow, the member of Congress from his district, and General Davidge, a well-known military man, both of them evidently about to take the train.

There was a shabby-looking man hanging about the station, and the three had a meeting that Henshaw witnessed,

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and that sent him into convulsions of laughter. He laughed all the way back to the office, and, having a few minutes to himself, he sat down and wrote on a writing-pad something which he very bashfully handed to Murray. Murray read it, and laughed uproariously.

“It was a great deal funnier when it happened,” said Henshaw, diffidently.

The next morning Henshaw was astounded to find his story printed in the paper. It related how General Davidge and Mr. Snow, thinking they recognised a humble acquaintance in the shabby person, had both gone up and spoken to him. He had mistaken them for “confidence men,” and had promptly reported them as such to a policeman standing by. Just then the train was about to start, and the

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two gentlemen, having no time for explanations, ran for their car, the policeman and the shabby man pursuing them madly. Having missed their prey, the policeman and the shabby man ran to the telegraph-office to have the supposed "confidence men" arrested at the next station. Henshaw had written his account of the episode with a naturalness that was very entertaining.

The story made a small sensation. Murray had given the boy full credit for it, and it was really considered a clever bit of work. Henshaw was delighted, amazed, and awed at the thought that he had got into print, and when Murray dragged him forward blushing, and introduced him to the assembled re-

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porters as their future chief, he felt quite overcome.

Small as the incident was, it gave him a start toward the goal of his ambition. He went home delighted, and told Mary and Hugh of it.

"And wasn't it just the finest thing in the world in Mr. Murray, not taking the credit of it, as he might have done, and giving it all to me?" he asked.

"Not at all," answered Hugh, with quiet good sense. "He would have been a scoundrel if he hadn't. Where is your own common sense, Dick?"

"He hasn't got any when Mr. Murray is concerned," remarked the practical Mary. "The idea of thinking it wonderful because a man just happens to be ordinarily honest!"

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Richard flamed up at that. It was true that he loved and admired Murray so deeply and regarded him with so much boyish enthusiasm that he never could judge him as he did other people, but he felt that, if he were giving Murray too much credit, Hugh and Mary were not giving him enough.

"I don't care!" he said, doggedly. "I think it was a fine thing. He couldn't have done any more."

"He couldn't have done any less," was Hugh's reply.

"Well, you haven't seen Murray," was Richard's tart answer.

That was the milk in the cocoanut. Richard was completely carried away by the personal charm that Murray undoubtedly possessed. Whenever they

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were together, Richard followed him with his eyes, and thought Murray had the straightest figure, the richest voice, the handsomest face! And Murray treated him well, and even condescended once in awhile to talk and walk with him.

As for Murray himself, he saw, as everybody else at the office did, that Henshaw was not the sort of boy to be for ever answering telephone calls and carrying messages. He saw that the boy had too much keen desire to come to something, and that he was altogether different from those who are perfectly satisfied to be graduated as janitors, and do not trouble themselves to know more than how to read and write.



CHAPTER III.

HUGH'S improvement became marked and rapid. He had always had the use of his arms, and, in fact, his back had been the only part of him hurt. But toward the spring it was found possible to move him, and he began to finger his beloved photographic apparatus affectionately. He often said:

“If I had a wheel-chair, — one of these things a fellow can work for himself, — I could get about the place and

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take some pictures, I could have them finished up at the gallery, and perhaps make a little money by them."

But when Richard went to inquire the price of wheel-chairs, it staggered him. After awhile, though, the brilliant idea of a second-hand one dawned upon him, and he began a round of the auction-rooms. He was lucky enough to find what he wanted at almost the first place he visited.

It cost, however, more than he had ~~been~~ able to save during the months he had been in the *Daily Times* office, and the auctioneer promised to hold it over for him for a week or two. Richard was not used to borrowing money. In fact, the Henshaws had grown up very ignorant of the world in many respects, and

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one of their wholesome but unworldly ways was to do quietly without what they had not the money to pay for. Consequently it did not occur to Richard that he might borrow the money, or that anybody would be glad to lend it to him.

He remarked to Murray the day he saw the chair that he had to raise the rest of the money within a week, and hoped to get something into the paper — for he was paid space rates for the scraps of news he collected and wrote up when he had a chance.

“Seven dollars is it you want?” asked Murray, with one of his captivating smiles. “Why, here it is — pay me when you like.”

Henshaw looked astounded as Murray laid the money before him. Then

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he thought it the kindest, noblest, most generous thing on earth. His eyes filled with tears, and he grasped Murray's hand hard.

"I'll pay you," he said, "I'll pay you — don't be afraid of that — but I'll never forget your goodness!"

Henshaw actually asked to be let off ten minutes before his time in order to get to the auction-room before it closed for the night, and the proudest, happiest boy in town, he actually trundled the big chair all the way out of town to the little frame cottage. The first thing Hugh and Mary and little Jane knew of it was when they heard the tremendous racket made by Richard bringing in the chair. Richard felt perfectly justified in making all the noise he wanted.

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Never was there such delight. Hugh said little, but his eyes shone. Mary congratulated Richard upon at last having common sense enough to buy Hugh what he needed. "Because I should rather have expected you to bring him a hand-organ or a magic lantern or something of that sort," she said, with the sisterly frankness that always made them laugh and call themselves henpecked. Jane positively danced in her exuberance.

"And if I can only get out in the fresh air, I know I shall get well, Dick, and — and you're a good fellow!" cried Hugh presently, with a sudden enthusiasm.

Mary dashed at Richard and hugged him quite unexpectedly. "O Dick, your head isn't red after all — and your nose

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isn't so bad! I declare, I think you're positively handsome to-night!"

But what gave Richard the keenest pleasure was the recital of the part that Murray had played. Hugh and Mary were as unsophisticated in the way of borrowing as Richard, and they really thought that Murray had performed an unprecedented act, and for once agreed to everything Richard said in praise of him.

The very next day Hugh went out, and he seemed to convalesce by leaps after that. As they lived near the city park, he managed to wheel himself there every good day, and, with Mary's help, he took views which were finished up at the gallery and exposed for sale. Some persons

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had heard his story and were interested in buying his pictures.

His old employer, seeing a prospect of getting back so good a workman, did what he could toward selling the photographs; and the fresh air, and the power to earn a little money, which poor Hugh had almost given up the hope of, did wonders for him. The doctors came to see him, and told him that he would soon be entirely well, and the Henshaws were the happiest people then in the world.

Richard's infatuation for Murray grew apace after the money-lending incident. He saw nothing wrong in it when Murray jokingly admitted that he was in debt over head and ears, and the next day came out in a handsome new spring suit. He resented in his heart



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things he heard in the office concerning Murray, such as his being a bright fellow, but not wholly trustworthy about his work, and spending more money than he made. But Murray was so irresistibly likable that everybody in the office felt indulgence for him.

Henshaw developed rapidly what was called "a nose for news," and few Saturdays passed that he did not have a quarter of a column or a few little items that he had picked up and handed to the city editor. These things were not written at all after the pattern of the "compositions" which had been the torment of his life, but were simple and generally humorous statements of the little things that he saw from the point of view of an office-boy. Mary used to be quite

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shocked at some of these, which made a joke of serious occurrences.

“Aren’t you ashamed of yourself, you heartless wretch!” she would say, indignantly, when Richard had brought home a particularly funny account of a little collision between a milk-wagon and a fruit-cart. “Two poor men had their property injured, and might have been killed, and here you are, making a joke of it!”

“I’m telling the truth,” answered Richard, with a grin. “It *was* funny, and it was no great loss. They’re just the things that happen to everybody, and you know, Mary, the great art in *my* profession,” here Richard winked and Hugh made a bow to him from the wheel-chair, “is to make the small things readable.

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And just as soon as I can manage to get something in of consequence, I'm going to resign and ask for a reporter's place, and they'll give it to me, too!"

This seemed far enough off then, but the "something of consequence" in the paper came within a week.

One night Henshaw had agreed to stay on duty in place of the boy who did the night work, and so remained at the office until two o'clock in the morning. It was a warm night, and, if Henshaw had not been so sleepy, he would have walked home when his time was up; but instead of that, he got on the belated car that went past his house, and curled up in the corner by the door.

There were no other passengers except himself for several blocks. Then, with-

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out stopping the car, two men jumped on the platform.

Henshaw knew both of them by sight. One was Mr. Harbshaw, president of the Exchange Bank, and the other Mr. Whiteley, one of the cashiers. Something strange in their appearance instantly struck Henshaw. Mr. Harbshaw looked deathly pale, and shivered as if cold. Whiteley's face was very red, and he seemed excited. The conductor was on the front platform, and the sight of the boy in the corner seemed to escape them.

They began to talk in an agitated and excited way. Harbshaw frequently wiped his face, which was perfectly dry, and Whiteley seemed equally unnerved.

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"This is the longest night I ever spent," said Whiteley to Harbishaw. "However, we'll have time enough to sleep to-morrow."

"Do you think so," answered Harbshaw, grimly, "with a howling mob of depositors after us and the shutters up?"

The words went through Henshaw like an electric shock. He had heard enough talk of banks and runs and depositors and that sort of thing to know that Harbshaw's words meant the closing of the bank. He wondered if the people at the office knew anything of this. Of course they did, he thought for a moment. The city editor was an omniscient person as regarded local affairs. But then, as Henshaw remembered, he had taken no notes or messages

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relating to any bank; he had not heard any talk of it.

It wouldn't do any harm to run back to the office and tell what he had heard. In the next moment he had slipped out of the door and off the platform so silently that neither of the two men in the car knew he was gone until they saw a boyish figure flit past the car window.

Henshaw ran every step of the way to the office.

It was then ten minutes past two, and at half-past the paper went to press. In five minutes he had reached the office, and had started up the long flight of stairs. He met half a dozen reporters coming down. They all hailed him, but Henshaw had neither time nor breath to answer them. The first thing Woodruff,

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the city editor, knew, Henshaw burst into his room, red and hardly able to speak.

“Do you know, sir,” he gasped, “that I — I don’t believe the Exchange Bank is going to open to-morrow morning?”

“What are you talking about?” asked Woodruff, looking up from his desk, which he was closing and locking.

“I mean, sir, I was on the blue car when Mr. Harbishaw and Mr. Whiteley got on — and they both looked queer, and Mr. Whiteley said it was the longest night he had ever spent — but they would have time to sleep next day — and Mr. Harbishaw said how could they sleep with a howling mob of depositors after them and the shutters up?”

Woodruff made a bound to the speak-

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ing-tube and cried: "Stop the presses! Stop the presses!"

Then he caught Henshaw by the shoulder.

"Tell me," said he, "and tell it as straight as a die."

"I've told you," answered Henshaw, panting. "I thought it might be news, so I slipped off the car and ran back as fast as I could."

In another second the door opened and the foreman of the press-room came in.

"I heard you, sir, just as I was taking these proofs down," he said, hurriedly. "We can't hold the paper back more than fifteen minutes or we'll miss the morning trains." The city editor hesitated a minute, looking at Henshaw.

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The minute seemed an hour to them both.

“It means a libel suit if it isn’t true,” he said, as if to himself. “We needn’t mind *that*, but we can’t afford to have the paper making a fool of itself. But” — here he paused a moment — “I believe it’s news,” he added, in a low voice.

He went to his desk, wrote a few lines, marked “Display head,” and handed them to the foreman. “First column, first page,” he said, and the foreman ran out.

When the decision was made, Woodruff looked a little pale and smiled at Henshaw, who was pale, too.

“Young man,” he said, “you’ve either done the *Daily Times* a great service,

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or you've damaged it many thousand dollars and got it into a libel suit. And you've either made me or damaged me to about the same extent."

Henshaw was so wrought up by that time that he almost burst into tears. He began excitedly:

"I thought 'twas news, sir, and if you'd seen Mr. Harbishaw's face —"

"I thought it was news, too, and that's why I printed it," answered Woodruff. "If we haven't made fools of ourselves, I'll make you a reporter for this. That's what I hear you aspire to."

"Yes, sir," answered Henshaw, trembling. "I've been getting things in the paper for a long time and —"

"Your salary won't be much. I

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couldn't give you as much as the other fellows."

"I wouldn't expect it yet awhile. But I'd rather be a reporter on eight dollars a week than an office-boy on twenty dollars."

"Good for you! Clear out now."

Richard turned silently, ran swiftly down-stairs, and made for home.

He did not sleep a wink that night.

The next morning he hurried through with his breakfast without a word, and Mary thought he was troubled about something, but wisely did not pester him with questions. He ran out and jumped on a car; he rarely allowed himself the luxury of a ride in the daytime, but on this morning he felt that he must travel fast. Half a dozen men in the car had

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newspapers, — every one a copy of the *Daily Times*, — and staring Henshaw in the face were the words, in enormous letters:

**“THE EXCHANGE BANK
CLOSED!**

ALTOGETHER UNEXPECTED BY DEPOSITORS.

PARTICULARS IN A LATER EDITION!!!

“The Exchange Bank will not open its doors this morning. This wholly unlooked-for action was determined on at the close of banking hours yesterday, and will be a painful surprise to the community. At this hour no particulars are obtainable, but an extra edition will be issued before noon, giving all the facts in the case.”

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In a newspaper office there is undoubtedly a disposition to regard a "scoop" as the highest earthly distinction, without reference to the painful news that the "scoop" may proclaim to the world. Therefore, when Henshaw reached the office, he was prepared for rejoicing from the janitor and the elevator-boy, as well as from Mr. Curzon himself. Everybody was smiling. As Henshaw entered the elevator, the boy, whom Henshaw had treated with some condescension, thrust his tongue into his cheek and remarked:

"I guess you won't look at a fellow now."

"Why?" asked Henshaw, vainly pretending he didn't know what the elevator-boy meant.



THE U.S. DEPARTMENT OF JUSTICE

‘

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“Because they say you got the ‘scoop.’”

When Henshaw walked into the reporters’ room, he was set upon by Murray and Sevier and half a dozen others, and hailed as “the Horace Greeley of the *Daily Times!*” And then came in Mr. Woodruff. He shook hands with Henshaw gravely.

“If that story had turned out a ‘fake,’” he said, “where would you and I have been? But it’s true — and it’s one of the most important items of city news I ever printed. You sha’n’t lose by this, youngster. You go on the salary list as a reporter to-day.”

Henshaw trembled, he was so delighted. But then came the most intense curiosity to know the rest of it. The re-

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porters had scoured the town, and it was known by that time that the bank had made a tremendous failure. Harbishaw and Whiteley must have known its condition for a long time, and yet deposits had been received up to the very moment of closing, the day before.

But it cannot be said that Henshaw thought much of the bank, or of the president, or of the unfortunate depositors. He was just sixteen years old and a reporter! It is true he was at the very bottom of the list, and his salary would be small; but Henshaw's own keen sense showed him how much ground he had cleared in that one leap from office-boy to reporter. Later in the day Curzon, who now had Mr. Mildmay's place, sent for Henshaw.

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“Well,” he said, “so I have to get a new office-boy?”

“I hope so, sir,” answered Henshaw, modestly.

“You remarked, I believe, that you intended to rise,” continued Curzon, smiling.

Henshaw coloured.

“You have risen,” said Curzon. “I saw at once that you were ambitious, and boys of that sort don’t stay errand-boys long — and besides, you were too old and too big for the place, anyhow. Now we are going to make you a reporter. But let me tell you the truth, as a friend. That ‘scoop’ last night was a great thing, but it was an accident, you know. It might have happened to the best reporter in town or the most indifferent. We give

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you a good place to show you what we think of you, but you have got to work to keep it, and it would be a thousand times more discreditable to lose it after you got it than never to have got it at all. Understand?"

"Perfectly, sir," said Henshaw, with boyish dignity. He wondered if Mr. Curzon thought him such a fool as not to know that it was only an accident. Still, only capable boys can take advantage of these accidents when they do befall.

That day and the few days following it Henshaw counted the happiest of his life. He was mercilessly chaffed by the reporters, who would make a thousand apologies before begging him, as a personal favour, to take a note down-stairs, or to call the city hall through the tele-

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phone. Meanwhile, they seemed determined to get as much leg service out of him as possible before his successor was appointed.

He found time, though, to write a line on a postal card to Mary, which would reach her some hours before he could get home. It ran:

“Did you think I acted queer this morning? Well, I made the biggest ‘scoop’ that ever was — could not print the papers fast enough to sell them. And I’m on the salary list as a reporter, and they’re advertising to-day for a new office-boy. Yours, DICK.”

Henshaw, in the evening, indulged in the renewed extravagance of a ride home.

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When he got there, he dashed into the little living-room. There was Hugh seated at the supper-table; it was the first time he had walked to it for more than a year. Mary and little Jane both had on their Sunday frocks, and Jane cried, as Richard burst into the room: "Mary gave us chipped beef and strawberries for tea!" Hugh hugged him and Jane skipped round, but Mary sat strangely quiet. Suddenly she burst into tears.

"I'm so happy!" she said, laughing and crying both. "I didn't want you to be an office-boy — it hurt my pride, but I knew you couldn't do any better then — and now when I see you a newspaper man — a professional man — I feel so happy I must cry! You know," continued Mary, beginning to laugh more

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than she was crying, " I always was ambitious. I wanted my brothers to be somebodies — and now — "

Here Mary dragged Richard, as big as he was, into her lap and began to kiss him violently.

And they were all so very, very happy!



CHAPTER IV.

THE bank failure turned out to be a bad one. Within a week Whiteley, the cashier, was under arrest, and Harbshaw, the president, was missing with a large sum in notes and bonds, which he was known to have taken out of the safe the day the bank closed.

It had been suspected that Harbshaw would attempt to abscond, and he had been closely watched from the start. Nevertheless, he had apparently disappeared as easily as if the whole police

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and detective force of the city had been in a trance.

Excitement and indignation grew intense. The directors of the wrecked bank offered a reward of a thousand dollars for the arrest, or information leading to the arrest, of the rascally president; and the citizens held an indignation meeting, and added an additional thousand to the original reward.

Of course it turned every man and boy in the city into an amateur detective. Henshaw, who felt that he was the hero of the whole affair, thought it would be poetic justice for him to get the reward, but unluckily there seemed no disposition on the part of the office to give him the opportunity.

All the reporters were eager about the

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affair, but particularly Murray. He searched the files of the exchanges for any clue pointing to Harbishaw's whereabouts, and mapped out a whole theory of his escape. He argued that Harbshaw was an elderly man, not in robust health, and that he would be unable to follow any plan of escape requiring much physical strength. Most of the money taken was in bills of such large denominations as to make it difficult to pass them without exciting suspicion. Everything seemed to be against Harbshaw's chances — and yet he had vanished, apparently into space.

“It ought to be the easiest thing in the world to catch him!” cried Murray to Mr. Curzon, bringing his fist down on the table, as the two sat talking over the

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affair for the hundredth time in three weeks. "Old, infirm, obliged to offer hundred-dollar bills — yet not a clue to work upon! And two thousand dollars waiting for the man clever enough to catch the rogue!"

"He *will* be caught," said Mr. Curzon, quietly. "First experiments in roguery are apt to be either failures or only partial successes, as in every other first experiment. Luck has befriended him, but luck, you know, always lets one down in the end. Harbshaw had been an honest man all his life until just the other day. He was conquered by a criminal impulse, not criminal habits, and he knows nothing of the arts of an experienced scamp. I've always noticed

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I haven't anything, and I hate to come down on my mother and sisters for it."

Henshaw, who saw everything reversed where Murray was concerned, thought this reluctance to "come down" on his mother and sisters a most noble thing, and in keeping with the character with which he had invested Murray. If he had been a little older, and a little more experienced and clear-sighted, he would have known from the mere mention of the fact that sometime Murray would do the very thing that he expressed reluctance to do; for when a man once begins to parley with evil, it is all up with him.

Murray's financial difficulties really weighed upon Henshaw's mind, but he refrained from mentioning the subject at

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home. Both Mary and Hugh were better balanced as regards justice than Richard, whose overflowing generosity of feeling quite did away with any idea of impartiality in judging one whom he loved. It *did* occur to him that if Murray owed so much money, he ought to give up his suite of rooms and stop patronising the most expensive tailor in town. In fact, from outward appearances, Murray seemed to be the most prosperous young fellow on the newspaper.

But Henshaw drove the thought away as a species of treason. "Murray *means* to pay," he said to himself. "He just got behindhand, and then he's a free-handed fellow, and the very sort to run into debt without meaning any harm."

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In spite of all this foolish reasoning, Henshaw was still a very sensible boy. But he was not sensible where his affections were concerned, and he had a real talent in making heroes out of very un-heroic people.

All this time Hugh was steadily getting better. He had conceived the idea of getting up a book of suburban views, and had made good engagements for selling it. The ability to work once more was doing wonders for him, and now on pleasant days he could go a mile or two on the boulevards, rolling his chair himself. He could walk about the house, and in six months it was thought he would be well.

One bright May morning Hugh hired a boy to go with him, and had himself

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rolled to the railway-station. His chair went in and out of baggage-cars easily, and he stopped at several suburban stations to use his camera. A few days after this expedition he developed and mounted the pictures.

On the night after this had been done the two boys were sitting at the table, and just as Richard was getting up to go to bed, Hugh said:

“By the way, look at these photographs. I’ve just finished and mounted them.”

He opened the table drawer and took out several. Richard looked at them with interest.

“And here,” said Hugh, picking up the last of the lot, “is one that I ruined in the taking. It is the old Governor

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Henderson cottage out at Park Road. Just as I exposed the plate I saw that the upper window had been opened and a man poked his head out. Somebody taking care of the house, I suppose. He clapped the shutter too quickly, but the old fellow's ugly face had spoiled my picture. I finished it up, though, because it was an odd sort of light I had got, and I finished the old fellow up, too, just to see how he looked."

Richard picked up the picture carelessly, but the instant his eyes rested on it he uttered an exclamation. He grasped the photograph in both hands and turned deadly pale.

"It's — it's Mr. Harbshaw!" he gasped. "He's hiding at the Henderson place!"

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Richard could say no more; he only got up and ran for his hat.

“Don’t say a word to anybody,” he shouted to Hugh, “and don’t expect me back until morning!” He dashed down to the gate and hailed a passing car.

He had nothing to wrap the precious photograph in, but he put it inside his jacket and held on to it firmly. He realised that he must take some one into his confidence — that he could never in the world manage the thing himself; and then Murray flashed into his mind. What a great, grand thing for Murray! They would divide the reward, of course, and he and Murray together could do anything. So Richard reasoned, like any other strong-willed but inexperienced young fellow.

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He went straight to Murray's lodgings. There was a pretty little sitting-room and a bedroom beyond, and Murray came out, putting his evening coat on in a hurry.

"Well, Henshaw," he cried, "nothing from the office, I hope! I've an engagement at a reception, and I'm late already."

"Nothing from the office," answered Henshaw, in a choked voice, "but — but — look here!"

He handed the picture to Murray, who knew Harbshaw much better by sight than Henshaw did. Murray settled himself into his coat, adjusted his tie, and then took the photograph. He turned pale, as Henshaw had done, and almost shouted with surprise:



"HE TURNED PALE, AS HENSHAW HAD DONE."

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“When was this taken?”

“Five days ago,” answered Henshaw, in a whisper. “My brother Hugh was out after some photographs for his book, and he went to the Henderson cottage out at Park Road. You know it hasn’t been occupied for years — not since the old governor died. Just before the plate was exposed, this man opened the window and shut it together again, but not before Hugh had got his picture. Hugh finished it because of something curious in the light, and he showed it to me, and here I am. We can catch him.”

“And get the reward,” said Murray, in a subdued voice. He was quiet enough now. Writing a few lines hurriedly on a card, he called a servant, handed the message to him, and then dis-

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appeared into the inner room. Within a few minutes he appeared again, wearing a slouch-hat and a business suit, and carrying a little parcel in his hand.

It was nearly ten o'clock when they reached the station, and there was no train going out to Park Road for fifteen minutes. For the first time since he had seen the picture and grasped the possibilities in the case, Henshaw had a chance to think, and his thoughts were of an uncomfortable description. After some uneasy reflection, he said to Murray, who sat beside him on the waiting-room settee:

"Do you know, I'm not quite sure that I did the square thing by the office in not going there first."

"What do you mean?" asked Murray,

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roughly; and Murray was usually very gentle and refined.

“Just this,” said Henshaw, quietly. “It’s the biggest thing out, you know, this catching of Harbishaw, and it’s too important for us two to attempt out of our own heads. I know if Mr. Curzon had known of it, we aren’t the two fellows he’d have selected for the job.”

“Only the more credit for us, my hearty,” answered Murray, laughing nervously, “for we’re bound to catch him if anybody can. If there’s anything left undone on my part to get my share of the reward, you may put me under the pump, that’s all!”

Henshaw’s conscience, although it had got to work, worked slowly where Murray was concerned — so slowly that now

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he was partially imposed upon by Murray's sophistry, and said no more about going to the office. But when it was too late, when they were on the train for their fifty minutes' ride, he would have given everything he had in the world if he had gone to Mr. Curzon in the beginning. But it was too late now, he thought, as he sat with a throbbing heart by Murray's side, while they sped along toward the little country station.

They were the only passengers to alight. In the little station they found a telegraph operator on duty; some trouble had occurred with the suburban wires, and consequently the telegraph office was to be kept open all night for the convenience of communicating with the main office. Murray stopped long

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enough to find this out; he learned also that there would be no train for the city between one o'clock and five in the morning.

Murray asked no questions whatever about the Henderson cottage. He knew that Harbishaw must have kept hidden, since otherwise his presence would have been found out long ago; and while ocean steamers were being watched and despatches sent all over the continent, here the man was hiding in an unoccupied house twenty miles from town!

After leaving the train the two young fellows trudged along in the darkness by the railway-track until they came to the cottage, which had been the home of a famous but eccentric former governor. The gate was nailed, but they climbed

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over it stealthily and made for the house, which was almost hidden by the dense and unpruned shrubbery, trees and vines of many years' growth. The house was perfectly dark, as they had expected.

Murray took out of his parcel a chisel, and going up to a hall window, proceeded very cleverly to open it. It was a French window, and the fastenings were not in the best of order. He made, inevitably, some slight noise, but it was drowned in the southing and crackling of the heavy Virginia creeper swaying in the wind.

Within a few minutes Murray and Henshaw were standing in the hall in their stocking feet and the window had been gently closed. It was quite dark

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until Murray struck a match and lighted a candle that he drew from his pocket.

They found themselves in a large hall, with two or three rooms opening from it, and all the doors wide open. One glance showed them there was nobody downstairs.

They then began to mount the stairs. The roaring of the wind still did them good service, as not a creak betrayed them.

Arrived in the upper hall, they looked carefully about, and noiselessly tried every door. One failed to yield. At this Henshaw's heart jumped into his mouth.

Murray spoke in a whisper, handing Henshaw some matches:

"Go down and slip out as quietly as you can, and stay under the window. If

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it is Harbishaw, he may attempt to climb out on the piazza and down the gutter."

Henshaw did as he was told, and going down-stairs, got out of the window, making some noise as he did so; but it was drowned in a crash which he heard as Murray dashed against the door up-stairs and burst it in.

Henshaw ran as swiftly as he could round the house, and in a moment found himself below the room in which he was certain Murray had found Harbishaw. He could hear low exclamations and a slight scuffle, but a feeble, elderly man like Harbishaw would be as a child in Murray's grasp.

The chinks had been closed so that there was no gleam of light from the window of the room. Henshaw expected

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that Murray would tie the old man, and then come down to rouse the neighbourhood. But five minutes passed, and there was no word from Murray.

Henshaw could stand the uncertainty no longer, and crept back into the house. As he closed the window he heard a door open, and in a moment Murray appeared, coming down the stairs.

At the first glance Henshaw saw that some extraordinary change had come over him. His face was gray in its pallor, and he was buttoning his coat over something that made his breast-pocket bulge. He called out, in a loud but trembling voice:

“It was a false alarm! There was nobody in the room, after all. We’ve had our trouble for our pains.”

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Henshaw stopped, perfectly thunder-struck by the other's words.

"Why — why — I heard you —" he stammered.

"Yes, I know," cried Murray, in the same excited voice, "I made noise enough breaking in the door, but there was nobody there, I tell you — nobody!"

For a minute Henshaw and Murray stood looking at each other, Murray holding the candle on a level with his face.

That minute seemed an hour to both of them.

They were studying each other under a new aspect, for, with the illumination of an instant, Henshaw knew that Harbshaw had been up-stairs, and that he had bribed Murray to let him go.

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When this thought came to him, Henshaw ran up the stairs to where Murray was standing. The older man seemed as if unable to move. Henshaw's face was working, and the first real flood of tears he had shed since he was a little boy burst from his eyes.

"Oh, Murray!" he cried. "What have you done? What have you done?"

Murray remained silent, looking at him like an animal driven to bay.

"Don't you know what Mr. Curzon said, 'A first misstep is seldom successful?' You'll be caught sure and put in the penitentiary."

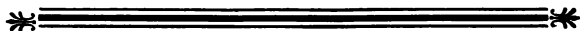
"Not unless you give me away," answered Murray, as if under some strong mesmeric spell to speak the truth; and then, suddenly remembering himself, he

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cried: "But I haven't committed any crime—the man wasn't there, I tell you!"

Henshaw seized his arm.

"It's not too late," he said, gasping with eagerness, "and I swear to you I will go straight to the office and tell the whole story before morning unless you tell me the truth! This is your one chance. Don't—don't force me to be the one to tell on you!"



CHAPTER V.

AS Henshaw stopped speaking, Murray seemed to grow faint. The candle would have fallen from his hand if Henshaw had not caught it. He dropped in a heap on the stairs and a groan came from his lips.

Henshaw tore open Murray's coat and dragged out a package done up in brown paper. Murray made not the slightest resistance, but sat looking more like a dead man than a living one, while occasionally a half-inarticulate cry of distress

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would come from him. As Mr. Curzon had said of Harbshaw, he had been conquered by a criminal impulse, not by criminal habits.

Henshaw ran down-stairs to the window and threw the package out into the shrubbery. Then he came back to Murray, who sat in the same place, evidently in the most intense mental anguish.

"Henshaw," the young man cried, "I swear that until I went into that room I never had a thought of anything but the reward! At first Harbshaw showed fight, but we clinched, and I soon had him under control. Then he told me if I'd let him up, and let him go, he'd give me ten thousand dollars! It staggered me, and some horrible instant impulse made me let him up, but I held on to him.

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He went to an old valise in the corner and took out this package."

Murray brushed his hand across his face.

"Well, I took it, and then I let him jump out of the rear window. I wouldn't live over the time I spent before I heard you coming back for millions. I seemed to turn idiot as quickly as I had turned rascal — all rascals are idiots — and — you see, I broke down right away —" And Murray, as if unable to say another word, stopped. The heavy drops were rolling down his face, and he was trembling as if he had the ague.

Henshaw's mind was so shaken and confused that he could hardly be said to think, but some instinct impelled him to cry:

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ing his face, and apparently the least agitated of the three.

“There it is — in that valise — all the bank’s money! You may think I’m crazy, but I’m glad to be caught. For three weeks I’ve lived like a rat in a hole up there. I got a little food occasionally, but I nearly starved, and I haven’t slept for more than a half-hour at a time since that — that night. The penitentiary couldn’t be worse than this — and the poor people will get their money back. The thought of the poor people’s money was what kept me awake. By the way, how about that package I gave you?” he asked Murray.

“That’s in the shrubbery somewhere — we can find it,” said Henshaw.

When Henshaw walked into the little

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telegraph office the clock pointed to ten minutes past twelve o'clock. The operator was at his instrument, and as Henshaw entered, turned to him eagerly.

"Have you seen any commotion at the Henderson place to-night?" he asked.

"Y-y-es — a little," faltered Henshaw.

"Well, there was evidently something going on over there about an hour ago, and I've fancied for a week past there was somebody in the house, and I told one of the *Morning Journal* fellows who happened round to-day. You see, it might just possibly be old Harbishaw in hiding. The *Journal* fellow came in a few minutes ago to know if I had heard anything more. He'd prowled around without finding out anything for himself, and I sent him over there."

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"Did you?" said Henshaw, with forced calmness, and what he would have called at any other time a sickly smile. Then he determined upon the policy of rashness. He turned back his lapel and showed a reporter's badge.

"I belong to the *Daily Times*, so you can't expect me to take any interest in what the *Journal* people find out. I've got a message, though, for the office."

He seized a blank, covered it quickly with writing, and handed it to the operator, who fell back in his chair in surprise as he read:

"Curzon, *Times* Building. Murray and I have got the man I saw that night in the blue car and came back to tell you

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about. Send somebody to this station at once. Murray has him at present.

“ HENSHAW.”

Hardly had the instrument begun to click, before the door flew open, and a strange young man ran in. He, too, grabbed a telegraph blank and began to write. Henshaw heard him muttering to himself as he wrote rapidly:

“ Found place — bird has flown — must put detectives on his track — has been at Henderson place within twelve hours.” Then he walked up to the operator and curtly said: “ Can you send this to the *Morning Journal* immediately? ”

“ He is sending a message for me to

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the *Daily Times*," quietly replied Henshaw.

The two young men looked at each other very hard. Each had some news of Harbishaw and each wanted to get it to his paper; but Henshaw had the wire.

To get the news to the *Times* was the most important thing; the next was — to keep the *Journal* from getting it; for, agitated and even unnerved as Henshaw was, the newspaper instinct for a "scoop" was still strong within him.

The *Journal* man waited patiently until he heard the last click of the instrument, but Henshaw had drawn a dozen sheets of old manuscript out of his pocket, and handed them to the operator.

"Send that," he said.

The *Journal* man, nearly wild with

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impatience, concluded to try a little persuasion upon Henshaw, who looked very young and boyish to be sending anything of consequence to a newspaper. He therefore said, politely:

“Excuse me, but I have an important despatch that I am anxious to send, and I would be glad to have the wire for a few minutes.”

“Excuse *me*,” answered Henshaw, with equal politeness; “my despatches are important, too,” and he immediately began writing furiously on the telegraph blanks around him.

The *Journal* man saw Henshaw’s scheme in a minute. The old manuscript was just something he happened to have in his pocket, and he was merely sending it to hold the wire. The operator

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grinned when Henshaw remarked to him:

"The wire is mine until you are checked at the other end, isn't it?"

"Yes," answered the operator, working away with a smile.

The steady click went on for five minutes more.

The *Journal* man then began to beg.

"See here," he said, "I know your game! Your paper's got it. Don't be a dog in a manger; let me have it, too!"

"Can't—first duty to the paper," answered Henshaw, writing away. "I have got a *Journal* fellow here who is dying to get the wire, but I'll send until I drop before he shall have it." This he supplemented by a full but somewhat mixed history of what had happened,



"I HAVE GOT A *JOURNAL* FELLOW HERE WHO IS
DYING TO GET THE WIRE."



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interspersed with the formula found on the back of the telegraph blanks.

"Isn't there a telephone anywhere in this town?" demanded the *Journal* man, in a rage.

"There might as well not be any," said the operator, laughing. "The only station is down in Pendleton's store, and locked up since nine o'clock. He lives most two miles out, and he wouldn't come in if you begged him on your knees."

The *Journal* man grew desperate.

"This is infamous!" he cried to the operator. "If you keep this up, the *Journal* will make it its business to have you fired out!"

"And the *Daily Times* will give you a better place at more money," said Henshaw.

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The operator, nettled by the *Journal* man's threat, continued to pound away with renewed energy, and a determination to stick by the *Daily Times*. The *Journal* man then began to get restless. There were no more trains to town until the "owl train" should pass, soon after one o'clock. He concluded to hold out until then. The operator was beginning to get very tired, and begged for a rest. This Henshaw agreed to, but he stood by, holding a pile of closely written blanks before him. As soon as the operator could begin again, he started off on Henshaw's pile.

Meanwhile one o'clock approached, and with its approach the operator's face was wreathed in smiles. He was clearly on the side of the *Times*. As the rumble

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of the train drew near, the *Journal* man went out to board it, but what was his surprise and disgust when it rushed past without stopping! He ran to the station-master, who was just putting out his lantern.

"Why didn't that train stop here?" he cried.

"Because," answered the man, "it don't stop without a signal, and I didn't know you were a passenger. You haven't been in the waiting-room; you've just been telegraphing."

"That's just what I've not!" groaned the unlucky reporter, turning back disgustedly into the little telegraph office.

"You might as well make up your mind that the *Journal* will be 'scooped,'" said Henshaw to him, "but you've done

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your best. If you had got here first, it would have been all up with the *Times*. But you can't do anything, and, if you'll wait a little while, there'll be a special train out from the *Times* office, and we'll take you back to town."

"Small favours thankfully received," answered the *Journal* man, from the midst of his despair at being "scooped."

Within ten minutes the rattle and roar of the "special" was heard; it was coming as if the engineer had thrown the throttle wide open. When it pulled up at the station, Mr. Woodruff and two or three men jumped off and ran into the little office. Henshaw, with wide, bright eyes full of excitement, was standing by the operator, reading something off monotonously, while the man, with a white

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face and leaning his head on his left hand, worked at the instrument steadily.

The *Journal*, like the *Times*, went to press at half-past two, and there was still an hour in which it might get the news — and the *Journal* man still held on desperately to the last chance of getting the news to his paper.

“I say, Mr. Woodruff,” said Henshaw, almost before Woodruff had a chance to speak, “can’t one of these fellows take the wire now? I’ve been standing —”

Before Henshaw could finish the sentence, the operator fell back in his chair, with a faint smile. “I’m done up,” he said. “I’m not very strong, and I feel like fainting. I couldn’t send another word to save my life.”

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There was clearly no chance for the *Journal* man. Somebody helped the operator to the door, where the fresh, cool air of the summer night seemed to revive him; but it was perfectly plain that, as he said, he was "done up."

And so was Henshaw. With a reporter to stand guard on the telegraph instrument in case the man might revive enough to go to work, and with Mr. Woodruff and another reporter and an officer with a warrant plunging down the railway tracks toward the Henderson place, there was no doubt of the success of the "scoop." Henshaw climbed into the special car, which was on a siding, the locomotive having steam up and ready to start at a moment's notice. The only thing obtainable at the station had

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been an ordinary box car, with some hay spread on the floor. Henshaw, in spite of the tension of his nerves, was so overcome with fatigue that he lay down in a corner, and in two minutes was sound asleep.

The next thing he remembered was the rattle and rumble of starting. He saw by the light of a lantern, as they bumped along rapidly, a group of two or three strange men guarding Harbshaw and the valise — and Murray was bending over Henshaw with a strange look upon his face. And there were Mr. Woodruff, and a reporter or two, and the discomfited *Journal* man. Henshaw started up and began to rub his eyes, and in an instant it all came back to him. Murray was the first who spoke.

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"Henshaw deserves the reward," he said.

"Half of it, you mean," answered Mr. Woodruff.

There was only a dim light in the car from the lantern, but Henshaw could see Murray's handsome face, and there was a new expression upon it, — something that had aged it and humiliated it, — and he looked like anything but a man who has just achieved a great success.

"No, I don't mean half," said he, firmly. "I mean that Henshaw did the whole thing, and I wouldn't touch a dollar of that reward for any earthly consideration."

This was so unlike Murray that Woodruff concluded him to be unnerved and a little befogged by the excitement of the

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occasion. Henshaw said nothing; he realised that Murray was acting strangely, and the saving common sense that went with the Henshaw blood made him at once take up another cue.

“Do you know, Mr. Woodruff,” he said, “I didn’t realise until we had got started and it was too late to turn back, that I ought to have gone to the office first, and let you manage the business. It certainly was ‘fresh’ in Murray and me to start out to do this on our own hook; but I declare, neither of us thought of it until it was too late, as I said.”

“It’s a very good thing you succeeded, young man,” replied Mr. Woodruff, deliberately, and with a peculiar look out of his eye. “I will give you and Mr. Murray a slight warning. In the future,

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when anything of the greatest importance like this occurs, involving the enterprise of the paper and its character as a news-gatherer, it is preferred that the editors shall have some share in the management of the affair, and I have a great mind to recommend that both of you shall have your salaries docked for this week," which last neither Murray nor Henshaw took seriously; but the first part of the speech they understood at once. Suppose they had failed! Henshaw grew pale when he thought of it.

Henshaw could not return home that night; he felt bound to see the paper through the press. At half-past two promptly the building resounded with the roar and thump of the great presses. Harbিশaw was by that time safely

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lodged in jail, and Henshaw and Murray were being lionised by the staff of the *Daily Times*. Murray persisted in giving all the credit to Henshaw, while Henshaw justly said that he could have done nothing without Murray. This magnanimity struck everybody forcibly.

But Henshaw had undergone a transformation of character. He still loved Murray, but never, as long as he lived, would he again fall under the slavish control of his affections. He saw it all now, — Murray's weakness, his momentary lapse, — and the conviction came home to Henshaw that Murray, too, was a changed man. Murray had stood on the brink of crime, and by a miracle he had escaped.

He was not a criminal at heart, and

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the horror of what he had so nearly fallen into almost paralysed him. He got away from the office as soon as he could, dragging Henshaw with him. When the two were in the quiet streets, where the ghastly gray of the first dawn was showing in the leaden sky, Henshaw said hurriedly:

“Murray, you are behaving like a lunatic about that reward. You know you are entitled to half, and if you refuse it, with what Harbishaw will tell, you will at once arouse suspicion. You threw the package of money away, and if you take your share of the reward everything will be all right. And can't you see that it is impossible that I should be entitled to *all* of it?”

Henshaw argued with him all the way

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home, but when they got to Murray's room, Murray was no more persuaded than in the beginning that it was madness to refuse the money. Henshaw slept an hour or two on Murray's bed, Murray meanwhile watching him as a mother watches a child, and feeling in his heart an intensity of gratitude. This honest, straightforward young fellow had saved him. Whenever that thought came back to Murray, he would have given Henshaw everything he had on earth.

And the *Journal* was "scooped." The next morning the *Times* had the whole thing, and the names of "our enterprising young reporters, Richard Henshaw and Arthur Murray," were blazoned upon the first page of the paper. Henshaw was "made" as a newspaper man. The

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reward was a fortune to Hugh and Mary and little Jane, — for Murray steadily refused to touch a penny of it, — and, with a peculiar professional thrill that marked the true newspaper instinct, Henshaw gloated over the great “scoop” with a delight that all the words in the dictionary could not half express.

THE END.



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